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ABSTRACT

Three different aspects of the post-affluent age are largely concerned with economic, societal, and technological issues. It is questionable whether the skills needed to cope in this era will be acquired within the schoolhouse and the classroom or outside the traditional delivery systems of education. New partnerships with external agencies, resources, and forces are evolving in education. The study and understanding of these relationships should become a priority for education and the general public. (SAS)

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THE EDUCATIONAL CONSEQUENCES OF

POST-AFFLUENCE

BY

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FOR

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Secondary Education

U. S. House of Representatives

U S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
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INTRODUCTION

Future historians will likely characterize the thirty years from 1945 to 1975 in American society as a period of foolish affluence fueled by borrowed money.

With the end of the unique circumstances associated with the baby boom generation (born in the 1940's and the 1950's), in the 1970's the American social economy has suffered the collapse of affluence, which is the legacy of that generation. The overriding characteristic of the social economy of the new quarter century is post-affluence.

The advent of post-affluence does not represent an economic crisis. It doesn't even represent an economic problem in the Keynesian sense. The struggle for subsistence is not the issue for the United States. No, the questions that obtrude beyond the reach of economics are social and personal in nature. The problem of post-affluence is a social problem: It is the struggle to solve the Good Life Puzzle, and the struggle is often reflected in personal crisis. The isolation and needs of the urban and rural underclasses provide evidence that the United States now faces the end of the myth that "more will be better." There isn't much more to be had, and some say that there will be less; but there will be enough. That is to say, there will be enough if we redefine what "enough" is. The social economy of the future will begin with a realization of the transcendental nature of economic needs and wants. This is a social problem. The social economy of the future will struggle with defining a "just" distribution of income. That is a political problem.

Since a concern with equity is the abiding role of the federal

government in education, congressional oversight of federal resources and regulations must be guided by the realities of post-affluent America. This brief paper outlines such a perspectives and discusses some of the educational consequences.

WHAT "POST" PATTERN ARE WE?

Most futurists are agreed that we are now post-something, but they disagree on how to characterize our situation-"post" what? Michael Marien (1976) has tracked over sixty definitions or descriptions for the projected society of the future. The range is from "post-capitalist" to "post-warfare" and includes Marcuse's one-dimensional society (Marcuse, 1964) and Con Schon's Beyond the stable state (1973). These images and metaphors are attempts to bring some kind of thematic unity to the myriad bits of the future emerging in contemporary society. Lewis Mumford has said that we are "post-historical," By which he means that not only are we deficient in a sense of history but that our ignorance is partially excusable because we are beyond learning from past patterns.

In similar context, Robert Jay Lifton has suggested that we are all survivors and are all post-something. As he writes:

> Consider for instance, the widespread inclination to name and interpret the contemporary man or woman not in terms of what he or she might actually be but rather in terms of what has been -that is, in terms of what we have survived, We speak of ourselves as post-modern, post-industrial, post-historic, post-identity, post-economic, post-materialistic, post-technocratic, and so forth. There are pitfalls in this way of managing the present (or the future)

> after what no longer is (or will be), but the terms have an authentic source in the sense of survivorship, present or anticipated, that so pervades our deepest image of ourselves (Lifton, 1975: 135.)

Lifton suggest that as the sense of change intensifies, the boundaries between history and evolution are obscured. People seem to be plunging ahead in an unknowable process devoid of clear destination. They then "suddenly discover, swirling about, the total array of images created over the full course of their historical and evolutionary past." Lifton concludes:

> These images become an elusive form of psychic nurtiment, to be ingested, metabolized, excreted, and above all, built upon and recombined in some kind of vital process. (Lifton, 1975: 137.)

Some kind of symbolic reconstruction and theoretical integration seems to begin to happen as we treat the future as both a continuous and discontinous projection of the present and the past. Out of these projectives we can fashion a series of mental images around which the future can be analyzed. For our purposes, three such images or constructs can be useful. These are the notions of post-affluent, post-industrial and post-macho. Each is a meaningful way to organize an analysis of the future which builds upon the crisis and circumstances of the late 1960's and the 1970's. A brief discussion of each follows:

THE POST-AFFLUENT PROSPECT

There is differing evidence with respect to the economic condition of post-affluence. The assumption has been that affluence means discretionary income and is related to "opportunity, choice, and diversity." The condition of post-affluence would mean, then, that there has been a reduction of limits place on opportunity, choice, and diversity in the social economy of the United States. In the terms of the economist, post-affluence would be portrayed by a decline or leveling off of real disposable income. For the individual household we have indicated that a condition of subsistence or sub-affluence might exist. When more households have trouble making ends meet and realizing their expectations, they lose "discretion." In 1973-1975 the expectations of the American middle class were shattered. Within those two years, the purchasing power of the dollar shrank by nearly 20 percent, the value of household savings and other wealth and assets declined about 12 percent, and the size of household debts rose by over 18 percent. According to Business Week (March 10, 1975), the total value of all American households' net financial assets at the end of 1974 was only 64 percent of the value when 1973 began. Furthermore, the stock market decline in those two years wiped out $300 billion in stock values, and the households' equity investments were reduced from $974 billion at the end of 1974. Although the misery of the middle class cannot be compared with subsistence struggles of the poor, the sense of outrage caused by the rather abrupt onslaught of post-affluence in 1973-1974 has been followed by continuing malaise, confusion, and puzzlement among all classes of workers.

A decade of stagnation in the incomes of manufacturing workers is something new in the postwar era. In the earlier years, this group made steady gains in earning power, even after erosion by inflation and rising federal taxes. In 1946-1956, for example, a decade that included inflation, recession, and warfare comparable to those factors in a more recent period, the average real take-home pay of manufacturing workers with three dependents rose about 2 percent a year. But in the past decade, which by now includes two full years of recovery from the last recession, the gain was a microscopic 0.3 percent per year.

Even this calculation probably overstates the gain in the average factory worker's purchasing power. Translated into 1976 price levels, the annual gain in the last decade works out to about $5.66 per week. But nearly $4 of this gain goes into higher state and local taxes. For workers in many areas, the rise in local taxation may very well have meant no rise at all in disposable income over the past ten years.

Another characteristic of the beginning of the post-affluent transition was a dramatic increase in consumer debt. Consumer debt rose from 1970 to 1974 by 42 percent while after-tax personal income in the same period rose by only 37 percent. This means that a larger portion of post-affluent incomes will be used for debt service and payments on past purchases. Delinquency rates for mortgage loans and installment payments have crept up to about 4 percent a year. It should also be noted that while consumer debt rose by over 40 percent in the early years of the 1970's, government spending in the same period rose by less than 30 percent. Another indicator of the burden of installment debt, measured by the ratio of outstanding

installment credit to disposable personal income, is that this ratio rose to over 15 percent in the early 1970's. (In 1945 it had been 1.4 percent.)

Increasingly, American families have had to rely upon debt to maintain any kind of discretionary spending. In 1976, according to the Bureau of the Census, about 83 percent of American families had incomes below $25,000. Approximately 11 percent made less than$5,000. About 20 percent earned from $5,000-10,000 and another 20 percent earned from $10,000-15,000, and that 40 percent represented the families of the lower middle class-the sub-affluent. Another 32 percent of American families earned $15,000-20,000. Because of the problems of expectations, it is unclear where in the range of, say, $12,500 to 25,000, discretionary spending options begin to emerge and increase. But the dramatic increases in the costs of housing, transportation, medical care, and personal taxes in the first half of the 1970's sharply reduced the discretionary options of the so-called middle class. More than ever before the line between necessities and options depends upon uncontrollable costs and controllable expectations and lifestyles. Inronically, in January, 1978, the ecitors of Business Week and other conservative business leaders including former President Ford bemoaned the plight of the 15 percent of American families earning$25,000-50,000 (another 2 percent earned more than 50,000). Business Week, in analyzing the combined impact of the new Social Security Act and the proposed income-tax reduction, indicated that this group which "provides the savings" for American capital investment "is threatened with what amounts to liquidation."

> Take one example, a family of four with $35,000 a year in income.. The Social Security bill signed by the President last month will increase this family's payroll tax to $1,070 this year, $2,291 in 1983, and $2,503 by 1987. The Administration had implied that this savage increase would be offset by income tax cuts. But the preliminary income tax proposals, just unveiled, would take only $70 off the family's $6,218 tax bill. By contrast, a family with $10,000 in income would have its taxes cut from $446 a year to $16 a year. (January 9, 1978, p.92.)

According to the editors, "the effects of this egalitatian policy on social tensions are painfully predictable." Indeed, this conflict over "income shares" will be one of the primary dynamics of the post-affluent transition. The concerns are real. The super-affluent aspire to discretion over savings and investments. The affluent expect discretion over spending, either through disposable income or the provision of credit. The sub-affluent struggle to maintain discretion over the conditions of basic maintenance. In the meantime the subsistence sector has no descretion at all except perhaps in the unorthodox opportunities of the subculture of the urban underclass.

The tax break provided to the lower middle class by the first president elected in the post-affluent transition has both a real and a symbolic significance. However, given new resource scarcities and international realities, the tax break's real economic benefits may by erased by the end of the decade. It is a signal, though, that a national debate over a "just" distribution of income has begun. The unusual sense of abundance and affluence that flourished from the end of World War II until the early 1970's is hard to dispel. It has strongly influenced several generations. The baby boom of the same

two and a half decades has also created a "Bulge Generation" which grew and was socialized around the material realities and social illusions of that affluence. There will never again be, in this county, a generation of youth that had it so good. Affluence is now behind us, but we have survived it. It is unclear, however, how its memory will affect us or that unique generation that was nourished into adulthood from a basis of unprecedented material prosperity. The social values of that generation have been a source of continuing discussion in the mass media. When the baby-boom generation was concentrated on the college campuses or on Vietnam battlefields in the 1960's, they were easy to observe. As they enter the workplace and communities of the adult world, their behavior and values will be less directly observable but will be indirectly manifested in the dynamics of the market place and in the evolution of the social economy. The post-industrial workplace will be changing.

THE POST-INDUSTRIAL WORKPLACE

Mention of the marketplace and of the myriad transactions of the social economy bring us to the "post-industrial" concept. Daniel Bell (1973) had identified the five principal elements of the post-industrial society as he has studies it. These are:

- -the change from a goods-producing to a service economy.
- -the preeminence of professionan and technical jobs.
- -the "centrality" of theoretical knowledge as the primary course of innovation and of policy formulation.
- -the control of planned technological growth or development.
- -the creation of new kinds of computer-based systems for management purposes.

The generation growing into their late twenties in the decade 1970-1980 are entering a post-industrial marketplace where so-called service jobs are the primary economic influence. This service economy demands new kinds of interpersonal relationships among workers, between workers and management, and between workers and consumers. For most people the work experience will have a strong social element. Fewer workers will be oriented to a machine, or to the land as farmers or miners. Here again the society has survived the growth of the factories of the industrial expansion that was the dominant economic force in our society from the late nineteenth century through the middle of the twentieth.

There will be 3 types of service workers. Type K will be knowledge workers. Type C will be the lower class clerical and counter workers. Type P will be specialists in protective services. Data analysis, environmental analysis and human analysis will be the basic skills required. These functions call for a new Three R's of the service economy - Recording (of data), Relating (to people), and Renewing (of knowledge).

THE POST MACHO CULTURE

But it is also time to note that by 1985 it is projected that almost half of the working force will be women. This is one way to introduce the third post-something construct. This is the idea that the emerging social system of the next five decades can be usefully characterized as "post-masculine," or "post-macho." It is suggested that some of the unique elements of this post-macho society can be described as follows:

-the custom of educating boys and girls together-more than in the past-which has now led to joint physical education programs and teams.

-the supervision and direction of young males almost entirely by females, right through to maturity.

-deemphasis on physical strength, expecially in the workplace.

-new legal supports to enable women in the work force to compete more successfully against men.

-new patterns of sexual permissiveness and romantic love, expecially in the emerging adult generation, which reduce the aggressiveness preogative of men.

-new patterns of assertiveness and independence for women.

-a decline in the effectiveness of the military mentality in organizational leadership and structure.

-the growth of the matrix style of management which is essentially a dual-authority form of management similar to the two-parent family model.

-a release of additional creativity as the "new male" emerges and achieves greater acceptability.

The society in fact is going to become much more androgynous and will have a more even distribution of the characteristics of both sexes. What may happen is that a more balanced set of values will pre-dominate in all our institutional arrangements, even in the military. More desirable, perhaps, aspect of machismo silliness will no longer have as great an influence as in the past in the politics of our society. The most signigicant recent examples of such silliness, of course, were the attitudes of both Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon toward ending the Vietnam war. A current example was the widespread macho hostility to the Panama Canal treaty.

Each of the ideas discussed, post-affluent, post-industrial, and post-macho, brings a transcental quality to the emerging society. The lessened relevance or dominance of material prosperity, the social transactions

of service jobs, the new sex role relationships, an opportunity if not a necessity to redefine social and economic purposes and objectives.

THE POST-AFFLUENT SYNTHESIS

Out of these mental images we can suggest a synthesis of societal change which should guide our policy planning in the 1980's. Such a synthesis is shown in Table 1 as seven elements.

The significance of the Bulge Generation has been especially real to those in education. Post-affluent consciousness emerged out of the 1960's, but its signifcance is unclear and may be changing. The transcental nature of some economic needs and wants has been apparent for over a hundred years, at least since 1836 when Ralph Waldo Emerson and his friends formed the informal Transcental Club, Synergistic lifestyles and the evolution of an androgynous culture are interpretations that merit consicerable attention and debate. The reform of the ways in which we organize our households and our workplaces is under way, but it is unclear whether these innovative tinkerings will become matters for public policy. The general uncertainities of the late 1970's are reflected in the feelings of the managers of large-scale organization, both public and private, who must cope during these turbulent years. The best of them are more tentative than dogmatic. The inequality is real and will be recurrent through the 1980's.

EDUCATIONAL CONSEQUENCES

In one sense education has already experienced the post-affluent society. It has been a declining industry in a constrained economy. Educators of all types have experienced the socio-economic traumas of decline, dislocations and disruptions. As the enrollment decline bottoms out in the mid-1980's, it will be timely to re-examine and redesign the production re-

lations in the newly stabilized and reduced enterprise of elementary and secondary relationships.

TABLE 1

PORTRAIT OF THE

POST-AFFLUENT FUTURE

1. The significance of the Bulge Generation
2. The emergence and possible significance of post-affluent consciousness
3. The recognition if not the acceptance of the transcendental nature of many wants and needs
4. The gradual development of synergistic lifestyles in an evolving and androgynous culture
5. Innovative tinkering and possible reforms in households and workplaces including social-economic counseling and job redesign.
6. Patterns of uncertainty and indecision among large-scale organization including the federal government
7. Discontent and disruptions with respect to agreement on a "just" distribution of income among different socio-economic groups.

There are those who claim that education resists change and wards off innovation. Another viewpoint is that education is constantly changing. The students change every September and their behaviors are not constant from day to day or ven hour to hour. And some schools are literally swamped with behavior changes and student turnover. In this view schools are "too busy" to experiment with externally designed innovations.

Given this view it is the external socio-economic and political trends and forces which will generate changes in education. As these trends increase the social economic turbulences of the 1980's, the

schools may experience important transformations. Some of these trends are:

-the involvement and demands of significant numbers of activist parents.

-growing conflicts between demands for both equity and excellence.

-the continuing revolution in educational governance with its demands for accountability.

-the growth of the two pay check family.

-the mid career, mid life crisis of the Bulge Generation which will make the 37 year old the large single age group in most of the 1980's.

It is the latter relationships and the changing nature of work in a post-industrial service economy which may have unexpected significance for education. The new emphasis on youth employment programs may also accelerate this influence.

Larry Hirschhorn (1974) discusses the consequences for work and education of the emerging service society and the forces of "anti-development" that prevent the emergence of the services' proper post-industrial functions. He differentiates job growth--the mere expansion in the number of jobs--and job development--"the qualitative changes in the structures of jobs." To avoid stagnation, he argues, public policy-making must concentrate on the development of jobs and not just on an increase in numbers.

Hirschhorn describes the shift in post-industrial society to new sources of productivity, summed up as information and organization, by means of which the service becomes the dominant sector in the economy. New needs, possibilities, and skills, however, are contradicted and restricted by attempts to adhere to old

structures carrying over from the period of industrialization and modernization. Morever, different areas within the service sector tend to develop at different rates, causing antagonisms. When such an antagonism occurs, the more advanced service becomes checked, or to use Hischhorn's term, "rationalized," and effectively downgraded to fit into the older structure. The service is thus underemployed, and society as a whole remains underdeveloped measured against its post-industrial potential.

The crisis in jobs is, to Hirschhorn, an example of an antagonism resulting from unbalanced post-industrial development. A rapidly changing job structure and new education patterns should reinforce each other, leading to dynamic growth in both. But when growth in education outpaces the transformation of the job structure, the old patterns and inflexibility of the job structure cause the development in education to seem "excessive and wasteful". The probable, unfortunate result of this disjuction will be, he suggest, the "rationalization" of education by downgrading it-by, for example, reviving more traditional forms of education and vocation training. Such solutions will more likely result in a retardation of the potential for development of society as a whole.

What is needed instead, he argues, is the upgrading of the productive "human factor." Reorganization, flexibility, and continually creative response to changes must characterize all service systems. As one service changes, those other services involved by it must also change in order for it to develop. He writes: "Information, organization, research, labor mobility, all come to play increasingly important roles in the economy, only when human beings have reorganized their socio-economic activities to bring out the productive potential of these new factors." (1974: 9 and 11.) The alternative, to him, is economic stagnation and waste.

In spite of the current growth of career education programs in many elementary and secondary systems, there are limits to the utilization of educational reform as a device to change the future nature of jobs.

The team that produced Work in America (1972) also emphasizes the importance of equivalent forms in school as preparation for smooth functioning of the individual in work; schools up to now have been charges with preparing "Industrial Man," but changes in society have shifted to a need for preparing the "Satisfied Worker." They quote Alvin Toffler's description of fitting the schools to the needs of an earlier industrial society:

> ...the whole idea of assembling masses of students (raw material) to be processed by teachers (workers) in a centrally located school (factory) was a stroke of industrial genius. The whole administrative hierarchy of education, as it grew up, followed the model of industrial bureaucracy... The inner life of the school thus became an anticipatory mirror, a perfect introduction to industrial society. The most critical features of education today- the regimentation, lack of indivization, the rigid system of seating, grouping, grading, and marking, the authoritarian role of the teacher- are precisely those that made mass public education so effective an insturment of adaptation for its place and time. (Work in America, 1972: 141.)

Times, have changed, however, and "Industrial Man" is no longer a fitting description, since today's workers will no longer accept "authoritarianism, fragmentation, routine, and other aspects of the inherited workplace." The tasks of the schools in the present and for the future is rather, for these writers, to encourage the development of the "Satisfied Worker." In preparation for today's world of work, today's student needs, and tomorrow's will need, information about the world of work and a realistic

appraisal of work, "its meaning, its necessity for life, its rewards, its requirements, and its shortcomings."

To implement this basic shift, they suggest "Information-Rich Alternatives" and "Action-Rich Alternatives." The former include a strong general base in reading, writing, speaking, and arithmetic skills, learning "how to learn," and interpersonal communications skills. Useful also, they write, would be to broaden the curriculum to include courses to learn the procedured of the large work organizations that most students will probably move into, and in enterpreneurship to give students a better basis fo "work on their own" should they so choose. Action-Rich Alternatives include modifying present vocational courses and broadening them into practical courses for all students, in domestic skills, crafts and mechanics, and typing; simulations reproducing work environments; and work-study programs.

A different perspective is offered by Henry Levin (1975). He attempts to anticipate possible reforms that may become instituted in work in the near future, in order to propose "corresponding" reforms in schools to prepare students better for the workplaces they will be entering. Levin describes a "correspondence principle," by which reforms in education are likely to be made when the existing approach and the results it produces do not correspond to changes in the functioning of work organizations. Educational reform thus comes about as a response to the changing societal needs that have arisen. The basic premise underlying this principle is that "schools and other agencies of socialization serve to reproduce the social relations of production. Educational reform then, becomes functional only when the social relations of production are altered," and not per se.

To Levin, the "correspondence principle" is not operating at present,

and he seeks to reestablish the functional relationship between school and work by proposing a "taxonomy" of educational reforms classified into categories derived from probable coming reforms in work. He suggests that "modifications in work may require workers with different skills, attitudes and behaviors and that it is desirable to develop a classification of educational reforms that will be likely to correspond to such changes." Levin's categories of reform are:

- "microtechnical" - reforms that are "narrowly technical and individualistic in implementation." Examples in work would be a more flexible work schedule and job enlargement. Examples in education do not correspond exactly, but two types of reform in this same category are new subjects and teacher training and re-training.
- "macrotechnical" - changes in the technical sphere, but wider in scope than the above. Examples of such reforms in work are new staff organization, "revitalization" through educational and training programs, sabbaticals. Examples of such changes in the educational sphere are open classrooms, mastery learning, work-study programs.
- "micropolitical" - changes in the internal governance of the organization with respect to decisions on production activities and resource allocation." Examples for work are job enrichment and forms of participatory management. Examples for schools are changes in governance within the classroom and in the operation of the teaching process, e.g. peer teaching.
- "macropolitical" - major changes "in the governance and technical

conception of organization." Examples of such reforms in work would be worker self-management, employee ownership. Such reforms in schools would be community control, factory-run schools.

As can be seen from the examples above, Levin's reforms in the two areas of work and education only occasionally correspond on specific points and are not for the most part closely linked. In conclusion, however, he presents a summary of educational reforms "that are consistent with two types of work reforms." Work reforms that result in an increased emphasis on individuality would find their equivalent in educational reforms resulting in 1) educational technology, 2) differentiated staffing, 3) flexible modular scheduling, 4) open schools, 5) educational vouchers, and 6) deschooling. Educational preparation for work reforms instituting increased imphasis on cooperation and participation would result in 1) team teaching, 2) mastery learning, 3) desegregation, 4) micropolitical changes, 5) community control, and 6) factory-run schools. Levin suggests, then, that equivalent forms of organization and decision-making be planned for schools to prepare the students for the forms in which they will be required to function in the work world.

CONCLUSION

As indicated earlier the service economy in Post-Affluent America sill require a new Three R's. It is a question however, these skills will be acquired within the schoolhouse and the classroom, or outside the traditional delivery systems of education.

Education is evolving new partnerships with external agencies, resources and forces. Some of these partnerships are unhappy ones and some are excellent and extremely effective. The study and understanding of these relationships should become a priority for education and the general public. These partnerships are compelled by the resource realities

of post-affluent America. The consequences of Iran will be felt in the schoolhouse as the further emergence of the two and three paycheck family further disrupts the social economy of our local communities. Education Policy and educators must become more sensitive to their possible role as the shadow of post-Affluence darkens the expectations of the 1980's. Will schools be a creative force in the social economic transformation of our society?

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